



Issued by the General Service Office on behalf
of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland

Update on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Difficult times come to us all. We must all help one another. We must stand with one another. We must be understanding of each other's problems. We must share each other's burdens.

The General Service Office of AA on behalf of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland (GSBAA) will continue to update the Fellowship, via this document, during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Thursday 26th March 2020 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

GSO continues to provide its full range of services to all members. The staff are now working from home but are connected to their workstations and there has been no interruption to service.

Orders for literature continue to be processed, 12th step calls are being taken, and other vital areas of our work are being dealt with. Thank you all for your continued support.

We continue to investigate all avenues of communication. Security of members' confidentiality and anonymity are foremost. Many online meetings have **NO** guarantee that that these fundamental requirements are being respected.

We respectfully ask that unregistered online meetings please **act responsibly and with honesty and to clarify to all members attending your meetings that you are not in any way associated with Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland. It is possible that, through neglecting these basic principles, ordinary members are allowed to believe that they are acting within the structure of AA Ireland when this is definitely not the case.** Thank you all in advance for your responsible co-operation and understanding.

“Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided they have no other affiliation.” It is easy to see how our 3rd Tradition, in these unprecedented times, can be interpreted to include any two or three alcoholics who speak on their phones or via social media outlets or platforms and may, if they wish, call themselves an AA group.

As Bill W., our co-founder said: modern communication “used unselfishly and well (it) can produce results surpassing our present imagination.”

There is no doubt that AA will survive and thrive when the current emergency ends. And it will end. “**This too shall pass.**” When it does pass the hand of AA will continue to reach out to all who look for it.

Think of your AA friends and isolated members. Call them. Talk to them. Encourage them to do the same. AA will not be found wanting and will continue to secure the future of the Fellowship and all its members.

Tuesday 24th March 2020 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

The Irish Government has today 24/3/2020 announced that “social gatherings of no more than four people are allowed – unless they are all from the same household.”

There has been some confusion over whether Groups should close their meetings. The above statement should clarify this vitally important matter. Yesterday’s recommendation to close groups for the time being has now become Government instruction. In Northern Ireland, one of our Provinces, all meetings have also been suspended for the time being, following UK Government intervention.

Today, the decision was taken to suspend the Find a Meeting/Plan your Meeting section on the website.

Due to the unprecedented volume of calls to GSO, we request that members phoning GSO please be patient while waiting for a response. Where possible, please visit our website for updates **before** phoning to allow for urgent 12th Step calls to get through.

Literature orders may take some time but will continue to be filled. For Health and Safety reasons An Post and our courier company are changing their work rotas and this may result in delays.

We will continue bring you the latest information on the Coronavirus as it pertains to AA and its services.

Monday 23rd March 2020 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

In strict accordance with HSE, Government and WHO recommendations, we strongly urge AA groups that are still holding meetings where members gather, to consider their

responsibility to each other and to the larger public, and to close such meetings for the duration of this Coronavirus/COVID-19 emergency.

We are conscious that there are many alternative ways to keep in touch and, indeed, to hold virtual meetings; for example, WhatsApp groups, Skype and Zoom meetings, facetime calls and so on. *GSBAA, without instruction from Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Conference of Ireland*, cannot endorse any of these media meetings, we are nonetheless deeply conscious of the fact that these methods of mutual communication are an extremely valuable addition to members' "Sobriety Toolkit." We therefore urge group members to stay in touch using whatever means their Group Conscience may deem appropriate, keeping within our 12 Traditions, while still following statutory guidelines as they are issued and updated.

We will continue to update you all as the situation evolves. Be safe and be well during this difficult period.

Social Distancing

Social distancing aims, through a variety of means, to decrease or interrupt the spread of COVID-19. It does this by minimising contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals.

Social distancing is keeping a 2 metre (6 feet) space between you and other people is important to reduce the risk of further spread of the infection.

Self-isolate: People are now being asked to stay at home if they have 'flu-like symptoms (for example, fever, cough and so on) regardless of travel or contact history.

Social Interactions: Reduce interactions with people outside the workplace as much as possible.

All citizens are required to:

- avoid crowded places
- increase interpersonal distance (ideally separation of at least 2 metres, not shaking hands, avoiding communal sleeping areas)
- when in crowded settings, people should practice personal protective measures as they usually do (for example, frequent hand hygiene, avoid touching eyes/nose/mouth)

You should not shake hands or make close contact where possible.

It is estimated that all these social distancing measures will significantly reduce the demand for hospital capacity during the peak of the epidemic. This may also reduce the total number of cases and death

Friday 20th March 2020 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

AA members using Social Media Platforms and Social Networking Sites

The General Service Board of AA is aware that some AA Members are using WhatsApp, facetime, online meetings and other media platforms to stay in touch with each other. While we acknowledge all of these efforts to carry our message of recovery, GSBAA neither endorses nor opposes any of these initiatives. ([Disclaimer – The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland wishes to stress that there is no connection between \[www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie\]\(http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie\) and Social Networking Sites or Social Media Platforms claiming to represent AA](#)).

The personal anonymity or confidentiality of those attending online meetings or using other media platforms may not be protected.

Members are encouraged to consider the isolated alcoholic who may not have access to these media platforms. Please reach out to members in your locality to let them know that we are still here for them. This is an opportunity for us to get back to basics and keep AA alive and well during these difficult times.

Postponed and cancelled AA Meetings

Some premises where meetings are held may impose restrictions and/or postpone activities in their buildings and this may affect AA group meetings/activities. Please contact the relevant premises for clarification.

During these unprecedented times, Groups that need to close temporarily due to Coronavirus (COVID-19), can have their information removed from the website. The information will NOT be deleted from our database, but simply made inactive and can be made active again in due course. However, this information will only be accepted by GSO via an official AA mailbox, i.e., group mailbox, Area Secretary mailbox, Intergroup Secretary or Conference delegate mailbox. GSO cannot accept changes by phone, personal mailboxes or via the AA website.

Groups that are temporarily moving meetings to more suitable locations should inform their insurance company/broker of their temporary change of address.

AA Conventions and One Day Events

Changes to scheduled AA Conventions etc will be communicated through the official AA website www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie. **It is confirmed that the All-Ireland Convention 2020 is cancelled.**